



Miami-Dade County Commissioner . District 10



"Let's be proud of our community, let's keep it safe and clean."

Dear Neighbor:

As your elected County Commissioner, I would like to inform you about the issues that we are working on and our major accomplishments for 2003.

You may have recently noticed many construction projects in or near your neighborhood. I secured an additional \$4 million in this year's budget for more construction projects in 2004. These funds will be used to address the sidewalk replacement projects that have been requested by many of you over the past year. I will also be installing new sidewalks in older neighborhoods that currently do not have sidewalks. My goal in providing sidewalks in neighborhoods that currently do not have sidewalks is to encourage residents and entire families to walk around their neighborhood. Different illnesses, chronic diseases and obesity resulting from inactive lifestyles cost our nation \$77 billion a year to treat. If I can encourage one family or one person to establish a daily routine of walking around their neighborhood, this will improve the physical and mental health of that individual or that entire family. Furthermore, the best deterrent against crime is for residents to walk their neighborhood and report any suspicious activity. I have also funded the illumination of the walking paths at Blue Lakes Park and Southern Estates Park, which will be completed by June of 2004. I will also provide funds for the illumination of Royal Green Park. I hope this will encourage residents that work during daytime hours to walk and exercise in their neighborhood parks during the evening. I will also use some of these monies to fully develop West Kendale Lakes Park, which will include a baseball field, a playground for toddlers and small children, an illuminated walking path, landscaping, park furniture, and a park sign. Furthermore, I am spending \$1.1 million in the area of 82 Avenue to 87 Avenue and 43 Street to 46 Street to replace two inch water lines with eight inch water lines, improving the water pressure and quality of water service for that neighborhood.

Among the projects we were able to complete this year are the resurfacing of the Kenlands Community; drainage improvements and resurfacing of the roads in Royal Green; drainage improvements throughout Westchester; new sidewalks in the neighborhood north of

St. Brendan Church and School; sidewalks and road resurfacing in the area of SW 97th Avenue to 102 Avenue from Coral Way to Tamiami Trail; drainage in Winston Park and drainage improvements in Westwood Lakes. Drainage improvements are also underway in Horse Country and re-surfacing of the roads will follow upon completion of the drainage project. The projects were selected for the individual neighborhoods according to the specific needs identified by the County Departments, as well as through direct requests by homeowners. Although I have secured over \$65 million in federal monies for 690 FEMA drainage projects and \$25 million in Quality Neighborhood Improvement Program funding for sidewalks, road resurfacing, and parks projects, there is never enough funds to meet all the needs. I have received many requests from various neighborhoods, particularly for new sidewalks. As funds become available, I will move forward with those projects with the oldest requests commencing first.

I will continue to work with you to improve the quality of life in your neighborhood and to protect your property values. I need your assistance in reporting any problems in your own neighborhood. It is important to keep your neighborhood free of code violations. Remember that the longer that you allow problems to exist, the more these types of problems will begin to multiply and soon your entire neighborhood begins to suffer from conditions of slum and blight. These conditions lead to a rise in crime in our community. I know that you, as well as I, do not want our community to become a slum or ghetto. We want our community to be the best in the County. We have great pride in our community. For all these reasons, it is important for you to report any suspected criminal activity in your community. I am here to serve you.

Best wishes to you and your family during the Holidays and throughout the year.

Javier Souto

Javier Souto
javersouto@miamidade.gov



Commissioner Javier Souto,
Chairman Recreation and
Cultural Affairs Committee
(Parks - Libraries - Museums)

Postmaster: Please deliver before December 29

Don't toss it out. Toss it in.

Season's Greetings

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Javier Souto

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Commissioner Souto Requests Study of Heavy Truck Traffic on Expressways and Major Roads in Miami-Dade County in an Effort to Improve Safety for Motorists

Commissioner Souto has requested that the Miami-Dade County Metropolitan Planning Organization sponsor a study directed towards management of heavy trucks on expressways and major arterial roads in the community. The study will determine how other cities in the United States and internationally manage the flow of freight carried by heavy trucks on major roads and expressways; and identify ways to manage truck traffic in Miami-Dade, while providing a safe driving environment for motorists using smaller passenger motor vehicles on those same roads.

Over the past few years, numerous constituents have expressed their fears and complaints regarding the ever increasing volume of large trucks driving on our expressways. These constituents feel dwarfed by large single and multiple-unit tractor-trailer rigs, large dump trucks and

other large trucks as they drive on the expressway. They fear getting into an accident with a heavy truck. They complain that truckers who are in a rush to get their products to their destination often travel at speeds significantly above the posted speed limit and weave in and out of traffic, which poses a significant threat to smaller passenger automobiles. They have seen that accidents involving large trucks can shut down entire vital roadways at critical times. They fear that accidents involving these oversized trucks and smaller passenger cars can often lead to a fatality. They are calling for increased regulation of oversized trucks, to potentially include restricted hours of operation on certain highways, and/or restricting truck traffic to a single lane on certain highways, and to curtail heavy truck traffic when it conflicts with private passenger automobile safety.

The planning study will research current trends in the management of such heavy truck traffic in major metropolitan areas throughout the United States and the world to see what approaches work best to reduce motorists' concerns and fears, while maintaining the flow of goods and services that are vital to a healthy economy.

Commissioner Souto Launches Anti-Litter Campaign With Anti-Litter Road Signs To Be Installed Throughout His Commission District

Commissioner Souto sponsored legislation directing the County Manager to design through the Miami-Dade County Public Works Department a standardized "No Littering" sign, which will become the official "anti-litter" sign for all County roads and public right-of-ways. The only other existing County program for the aesthetic preservation of the County's roadways is the Adopt-A-Road program, which Commissioner Souto initiated several years ago. The program has been very successful in encouraging local businesses and community civic groups to adopt portions of roads and maintain them free of litter, in exchange for recognition in the form of a prominent street sign with the name of the business, organization or school.

Miami-Dade County has an ongoing problem with litter on County roads and public rights-of-ways. The County has limited resources to properly collect all of the accumulated litter. The County currently spends over one million dollars on removing litter from our roads, public rights-of-ways and our canals and waterways. This is a cost to the tax payer. We need to educate and fine those who violate the laws.

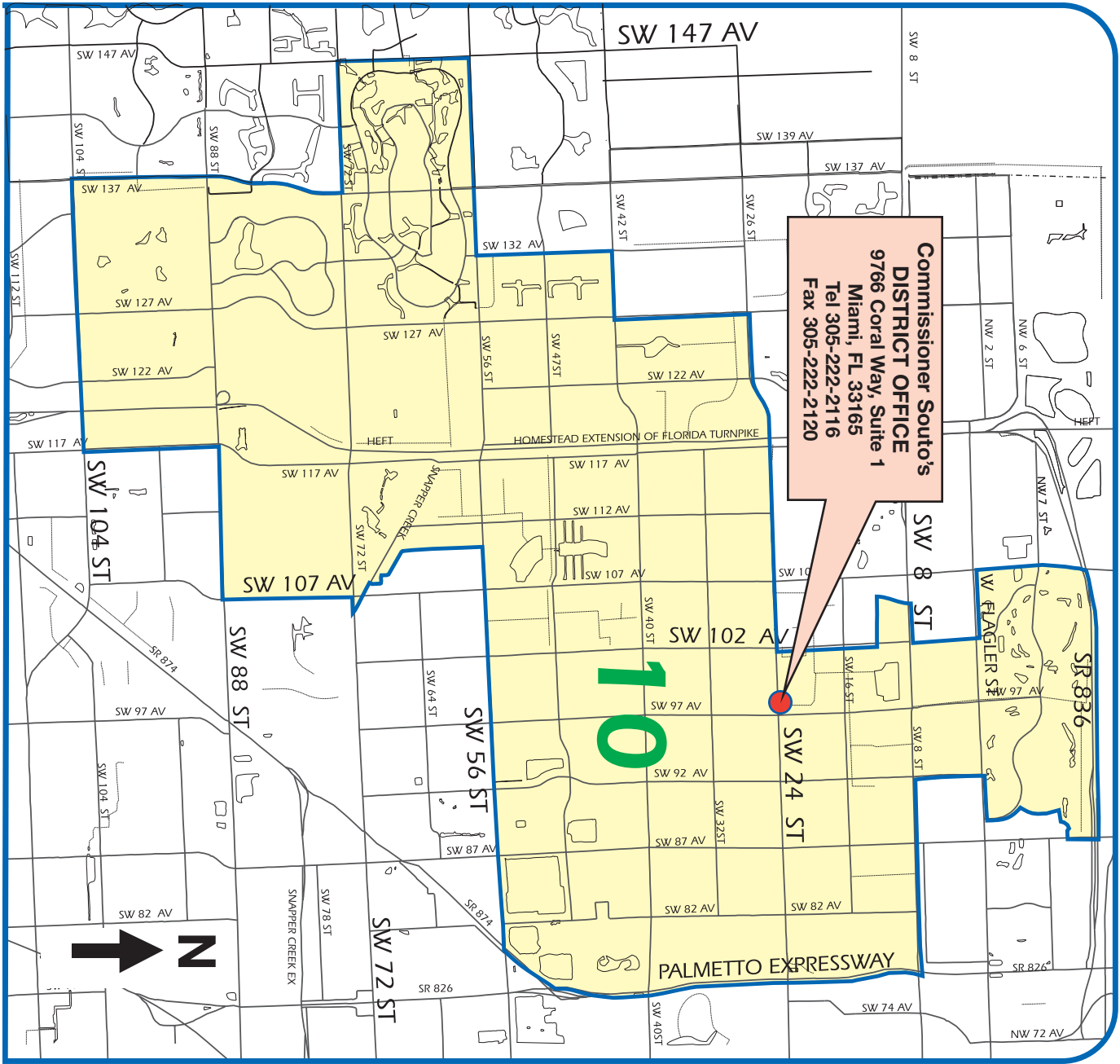
During the heavy rains produced by the South Florida rainy season, litter gets washed down into the storm drains and can lead to heavy flooding problems like those we have experienced in the past. The litter is also washed into South Florida's extensive canal system causing serious

environmental problems in our waterways. The great bulk of this litter remains where it is dropped until it decomposes. The accumulation of litter constitutes a potential public health risk, leading to disease and serious illnesses. Litter containing food products such as fast food containers with left-over food particles harvest germs that lead to diseases. They serve as a source of food for scavengers like rats and mice that transmit germs and diseases. A large supply of litter with food based products creates ideal conditions to support a large population of rodents.

The County has a diverse, multi-cultural population, as well as an annual influx of millions of visitors and tourists from around the world that may not know that the act of littering is a crime. Currently, the only "anti-litter" signs in our community are the State signs installed by the Florida Department of Transportation on off-ramps on the interstate highway system.



Commissioner Souto with the students and teachers of Everglades Elementary School as they kick off a new program that he initiated to teach students respect for the environment and community pride. The program is called "Don't Toss It Out - Toss It In." Students participate in litter clean up at the neighborhood around their school.



MIAMI-DADE COUNTY
Commission District 10

**Commissioner Souto's
DISTRICT OFFICE**
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Fax 305-222-2120

Participate in Monthly Town Meetings

Commissioner Souto holds two monthly town meetings, which offer residents the opportunity to meet with him and voice their concerns regarding neighborhood problems. He invites top ranking government officials from the Police, Public Works, Solid Waste, Parks, Building & Zoning, Emergency Management & Hurricane Preparedness, and Team Metro Departments. This gives you a forum to learn about your government and obtain resolutions to problems in your neighborhood. Don't miss this opportunity!

Westchester Town Meetings

Second Thursday of Month
(Except on Holidays & August Recess)
West Dade Regional Library
9445 Coral Way (2nd Floor)
Time: 7:00 PM

Kendall Town Meetings

Fourth Thursday of Month
(Except on Holidays & August Recess)
Winston Park Club House
8100 S.W. 132nd Avenue
Time: 7:00 PM

**Souto Sponsors
Legislation to Protect
Commercial Corridors
Such as Bird Road,
Coral Way, Tamiami Trail,
Flagler, and Kendall Drive
From Slum & Blight**

Commissioner Souto sponsored legislation consolidating all laws relating to the maintenance of the exterior of shopping centers, strip malls, restaurants, gas stations and other commercial properties. Miami-Dade County Requires that all Commercial Property Owners and Tenants maintain the exterior of the building structures, parking lots and public rights-of-ways abutting the commercial property in a safe, sanitary and litter free manner to prevent neighborhood blight and deterioration. These responsibilities include keeping shopping mall parking lots free of potholes, parking spaces properly marked to the required width, traffic signs legible, exterior of buildings and perimeter walls properly painted and free of damage and graffiti, keeping the property free of illegal commercial signs or outdoor display of merchandise, maintaining landscape materials, and brightly illuminating all commercial parking lots in the County.

The rationale for capturing as many sections of the Code pertaining to the exterior of commercial properties under one section is to provide commercial property owners, merchants and tenants with an educational tool on existing County regulations; and to apply the code equitably and fairly. The code enforcement officer can now provide the property owner with a warning notice containing a check list of items that need to be corrected in a reasonable period of time. Prior to the consolidation of all these regulations under one Chapter of the Code, property owners were subject to instant fines for a multitude of violations which were scattered throughout the Code. This made it extremely difficult for commercial property owners to keep pace with all the regulations impacting their properties. Property owners complained that the old system created an undue burden and was very subjective, with different standards of enforcement used at neighboring properties.

The Responsible Property Owner and Merchant Act also gives the County the tools to proceed with the abatement of a public nuisance on a commercial property, which fails to meet minimal acceptable standards and creates a situation of blight along a commercial corridor and negatively impacts all surrounding businesses.

The Responsible Merchant Act includes a provision requiring property owners to maintain their parking lot, drive ways, sidewalks and common areas, as well as abutting right-of-way areas (abutting sidewalks and swales) free and clear of litter and articles. This requirement on commercial property owners exists in the municipal code of every major city in the United States. Hopefully, with the cooperation of these commercial property owners with the maintenance of the litter generated by their establishments, we will begin to make a dent in the volume of litter that is so widespread throughout our community.

The proper maintenance of commercial property is not only required by law, but it also provides a clean, pleasant and safe environment for patrons and potential customers. It makes business sense to create the best possible environment to attract potential customers to your establishment. Allowing a business, a shopping center or an entire commercial corridor to deteriorate will cause potential customers to seek their goods and services elsewhere. When an area is poorly maintained and allowed to deteriorate it causes the belief, real or perceived, that it is a high crime area and potential customers will not feel safe patronizing establishments in these neighborhoods.



Commissioner Souto has provided the funds to install or replace over 50 linear miles of new or broken sidewalks in his district. As soon as the sidewalks were installed you could see neighbors walking and exercising throughout the neighborhood and small children and toddlers riding their tricycles and bicycles on the sidewalks. Now small children do not have to walk, play or ride their bicycles on the streets of their neighborhood, which is very dangerous.

**Commissioner Souto's Legislation
Reduces Governmental Waste and
Increases Accountability
to the Tax Payers.**

In April, the Board of County Commissioners adopted an ordinance by Commissioner Souto that provides the County Manager, as well as the County Commissioners with the tools to reduce government waste through a detailed budget analysis of all County expenditures by program, agency and Department. The legislation calls for performance based program reviews and zero-based budget analysis by County Department and includes all trusts and agencies. This in depth analysis of expenditures will increase accountability to the Tax Payers.

In the last couple of years, the County coffers have been growing at a brisk pace as a result of the booming real-estate market and the record volume of construction of new homes. Miami-Dade County's Property Assessment Rolls have more than doubled from \$64 billion in taxable real-estate values to \$130 billion in taxable real-estate values in the last ten years, as a direct result of the booming real-estate market.

**Commissioner Souto
Opposes Tax Increases**

The budget adopted by the County this year increased the taxes for a homeowner living in Unincorporated Miami-Dade County with a typical house assessed at \$130,000, with a \$25,000 homestead exemption by \$11 in Countywide Property Taxes, because a bond debt that expired this year was re-approved by the County Commission. There was also a \$50 increase in the garbage fee and a 6% increase in Water & Sewer rates. A typical household that consumes \$24 monthly or \$72 quarterly in Water & Sewer services would pay an additional \$17 annually. So for a typical owner of a home assessed at \$130,000, this year represents an approximate \$78 increase in County Commission approved taxes.

This does not include the new tax approved by the Children's Trust, which approved an additional tax of .5 mills, as authorized by the voters last year. For a homeowner with an assessed value of \$130,000 this new tax would mean an additional \$52.50 in property taxes.

Commissioner Souto not only opposed all of these tax increases, but further tried to lower the Countywide Operating Millage by .389 mills, which for a homeowner with a home assessed at \$130,000 would have meant a decrease of an additional \$41 in property taxes, but only two commissioners supported this substantial tax reduction. Commissioner Souto did successfully lead opposition to a \$12 annual tax on cats which was defeated. You may hear some County Officials say that the Countywide Operating Millage is lower than last year, because they lowered that portion by .025 mills, which translates to a token savings to a homeowner with a home assessed at \$130,000 of

Southwest Senior High School Principal Jorge Sotolongo and students from the Class of 2003 Student Government join Commissioner Souto as they unveil the Eagles Boulevard Commemorative sign, which was designed by the students. Commissioner Souto asked the County's Department of Parks & Recreation to construct and install the sign, which was paid for by the Commissioner. Earlier this year, Commissioner Souto co-designated SW 50 Terrace, which is the road that runs in front of Southwest Senior High School as Eagles Boulevard in recognition of the school's mascot. The request for the street naming was brought to the Commissioner by the Students of the graduating Class of 2003 and the members of their student government.



Commissioner Souto joins Police Major DiBernardo and members of Mothers Against Drunk Drivers (MADD) to kick off the "Designate A Driver" campaign.

Remember: Don't drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Be a responsible driver.

This year's \$130 billion in taxable real-estate values is up \$16 billion from last year's \$114 billion in taxable real-estate values.

However, there has not been a corresponding significant reduction in the millage rates, just minor adjustments which look good on paper, until the taxpayers receive their annual tax bill. At the same time that County property tax revenues have grown, the County's budget has continued to grow exponentially, which is the reason that there has not been any significant property tax relief to the homeowners of Miami-Dade County. This is why Commissioner Souto sponsored this legislation forcing the County Manager and Department Directors to analyze and justify each and every expenditure by the government. If a County program, function or expenditure cannot be justified, it must be eliminated. If a function can be performed by another governmental unit, it must be consolidated. If a function or service can be done through a less expensive method, including through the private sector, then the County has a responsibility to the tax payers to make the appropriate changes. Commissioner Souto cannot and will not support a County budget that grows incrementally each year, with no relief in sight for the hard working tax payers and the retired homeowners in this community.

about \$2.62 annually, compared to the \$130.50 in tax increases that were approved. When Commissioner Souto proposed the \$130.50 tax reduction plus the additional \$41 reduction in the Countywide Millage, for a total reduction in the tax bill for a home assessed at \$130,000 of \$171.50, those opposed brought out the parade of horrors. This will mean an \$87 million reduction in the budget cried opponents. This will mean cutting 1,000 jobs from the current total of 30,000 County jobs, they said. It will mean cutting social services and programs.

We are facing economic uncertainty. Tourism and travel is down 20 percent in our community. International Trade is also down. As interest rates begin to climb once again, the construction boom will soon end and we will be seeing layoffs and cutbacks in the construction industry, the mortgage banking industry, the real-estate industry, the building supply industry, furniture industry, and every other industry that is directly and indirectly dependant on a robust construction based economy. We have a community that is growing older, with an increasing number of retirees living on fixed incomes. If property taxes, garbage fees, water and sewer rates, electric utility rates, telephone rates, cable television rates, homeowner insurance costs, automobile insurance costs and gasoline prices continue to escalate, these retirees will be faced with the prospect of being forced to sell a home that they have worked all their lives to pay off. Residents who rent apartments are also feeling the pain of all these rising taxes and utility costs, because the property owners simply increase the rents and pass on the costs of the escalating taxes. This is why the cost of renting an apartment in this community has doubled over the last 10 years. We have a community that is poor and growing poorer. We have to be careful.

The Citizen Wins - "Major Finished Projects"

- Created the Social & Economic Development Council, a think tank of economists and college professors, who will develop short and long term plans to address the social and economic consequences of the downturn in Miami-Dade County's economy and reinvigorate economic development.
- Sponsored legislation to improve security at our sensitive Water and Sewer facilities which supply drinking water to the residents of our community.
- Obtained litter cans for bus stops for District 10.
- Passed law mandating commercial establishments to place litter cans near entrances.
- Passed law requiring commercial establishments to install bike racks.
- Created the Bikes on Buses and Bikes on Metrorail Programs.
- Initiated the "Stolen Car Detection & Criminal Profile Program" at Seaport.
- Obtained street sweeper trucks to clean Dade County's streets.
- Secured County property earmarked for development as high density apartments for use as Kendall Soccer Park.
- Purchased "Welcome to Westchester" and the "Welcome to Kendall" signs.
- Created the "Golden Guide to the Dade County Code" and the "Resident Guide to Local Services."
- Closed down two night clubs that were havens for drugs and prostitution & Closed down all lingerie modeling studios and massage parlors in district.
- Obtained a state grant to landscape the Palmetto (SR 826) & Landscaped over 80 Miles of District Roads.
- Appropriated \$12,400 in funding to the Kendall Federation of Homeowners for the purchase of traffic radar devices.
- Created "Friends of the Metro Parks" program which was used to refurbish Sunset Park through private sector donations.
- Created "Friends of the Police" program which was used to open a privately funded police work station on Bird Road.



The Commissioner and Miami-Dade Police Officer Paul Hernandez at a neighborhood crime watch meeting. Commissioner Souto organizes anti-crime block meetings in neighborhoods throughout his district to promote the formation of crime watch groups. These groups have been successful in reporting crime and protecting the neighborhoods. If you have an existing crime watch group, Commissioner Souto would welcome the opportunity to join your group and listen to your concerns. If you would like to organize a crime watch group in your neighborhood, please call the Commissioner and he will personally assist you in organizing a crime watch group.



Young soccer players from the Kendall area compete in a soccer match on the new artificial turf fields at the Kendall Soccer Park. Soccer athletes and fans have finally realized the dream of a major Miami Dade County Park dedicated exclusively to the sport of soccer and the development and promotion of youth soccer programs and competition. It is important to promote youth soccer programs and youth soccer competition in this community. Soccer is a sport that is open to boys and girls and allows them to develop comradery, discipline, team work and other important skills. The Soccer Park has a walking path which borders the perimeter of the beautifully landscaped grounds of the new park and provides area residents an opportunity to exercise in a safe and scenic setting. There are two illuminated fields in operation there. Eventually there will be five. In the last year, under Commissioner Souto's chairmanship, the Parks Department has inaugurated twenty soccer fields in different parts of the County.



Commissioner Souto inspects a new drainage project that will protect a residential neighborhood in his district from future flooding episodes. Commissioner Souto's district will benefit from over \$65 million in new drainage improvements.



The County produces a manual, The Golden Guide to Miami-Dade County Codes, to educate and inform Miami-Dade County residents regarding local laws and regulations, which is written in layman's language to clearly inform the average person on what is legal and what is illegal, so they can become good, law abiding residents of this community. This manual, created at the request of Commissioner Souto, is available free of charge, in English or Spanish, at Commissioner Souto's office, as well as any Team Metro Office.

- Obtained playgrounds for toddlers (tot lots) for Banyan Elementary School, Concord Park, Southern Estates Park in Village Green, and Sunset Park.
- Established an "Adopt-A-Road" program to permit local organizations and private corporations to beautify roads.
- Provided the Mildred Pepper Senior Center with \$150,000 to purchase new air-conditioned buses for senior citizens.
- Drafted two laws prohibiting noises that disturb the peace and tranquility of residential communities.
- Sponsored laws to eliminate illegal sexual activity in adult book stores and to protect residential communities, schools and parks from adult establishments.
- Directed the County Manager to develop a system of filtering pornography from library computers accessible to unsupervised minors.
- Secured funding for the Bird Road Max & the Coral Way Max Express Bus Service.
- Secured \$4 million to build a world class equestrian center at Tropical Park
- Paved over 12 square miles or half of the roads in the district.
- Reformed County jail food service practices that were wasting millions of dollars on jail inmates.
- Drafted laws that require all cash registers in Dade County to have a screen visible to consumers, so they can see their merchandise transaction as it is charged.
- Secured \$350,000 for outdoor emergency call boxes at County parks to provide safety to families who use parks.
- Initiated Mini Urban Forrest Program to reclaim abandoned vacant lots and strips of land and landscape them with trees which are adopted and maintained by neighboring schools.
- Sponsored the resolution that created the now popular "Getting to Know Your Commissioner", which airs on channel 34 (the County channel).



Commissioner Souto joins Roosevelt Bradley, Miami-Dade Transit Director, to launch a new Bike and Ride campaign that will make it easier than ever for transit riders to take their bicycles aboard Metrobus, Metromover and Metrorail. The Bike and Ride program allows transit patrons to extend their trip by bringing along their bicycles on transit vehicles with more ease. Riders can now board Metrobus without a permit and peak time restrictions and special car designations for bicycles on Metrorail have been lifted. It is also a practical way for individuals and families to access parks and attractions that would be too far to get to by transit or bicycles alone. Currently, 75% of Metro buses carry a bicycle rack.

Helpful County Numbers

Bulky waste pick-up (trash pile)	305-594-1500
Police non-emergency	305-476-5423
To report a street light that is not working (Call Commissioner Souto)	305-222-2116 305-375-4835
To report a traffic light that is not functioning properly (Call Commissioner Souto)	305-222-2116 305-375-4835
To report a missing or vandalized "Stop," traffic, or street sign (Call Commissioner Souto)	305-222-2116 305-375-4835
To report a stray dog or a Pitbull	305-884-1101
Graffiti Hotline	305-375-3461
To request mosquito fumigation in your neighborhood	305-592-1186
For Consumer Complaints regarding your cable T.V. provider, a mechanic or auto repair shop, moving company, locksmith, gasoline station, dry cleaning business, automobile rental company, restaurant or any other type of business or merchant.	305-375-3677
For any other problem please call Commissioner Javier Souto	305-222-2116 305-375-4835